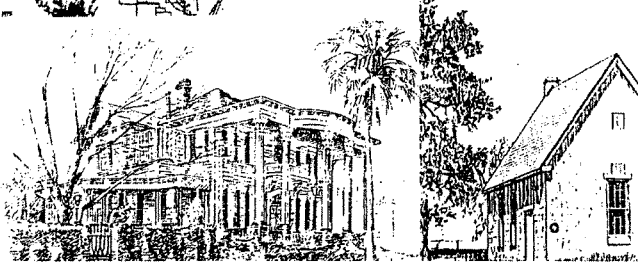


Design Guidelines For The
Historic Districts
of the
City of San Marcos, Texas



This publication is a project of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of San Marcos:

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Purpose of the Design Guidelines

These guidelines and recommendations are intended to preserve and maintain the character of the historic buildings in San Marcos. They reinforce and protect the defining features of the historic districts and define those visual elements which are common to the district as well as the qualities unique to this community.

This document should help to preserve the integrity of historic buildings and enhance the value of the Historic Districts for both the private investor, residents and owners, and the community as a whole. When addressing changes to an individual building, it must not be taken out of context. Modifications affect the block as a whole and should have the broad interest of the community in mind.

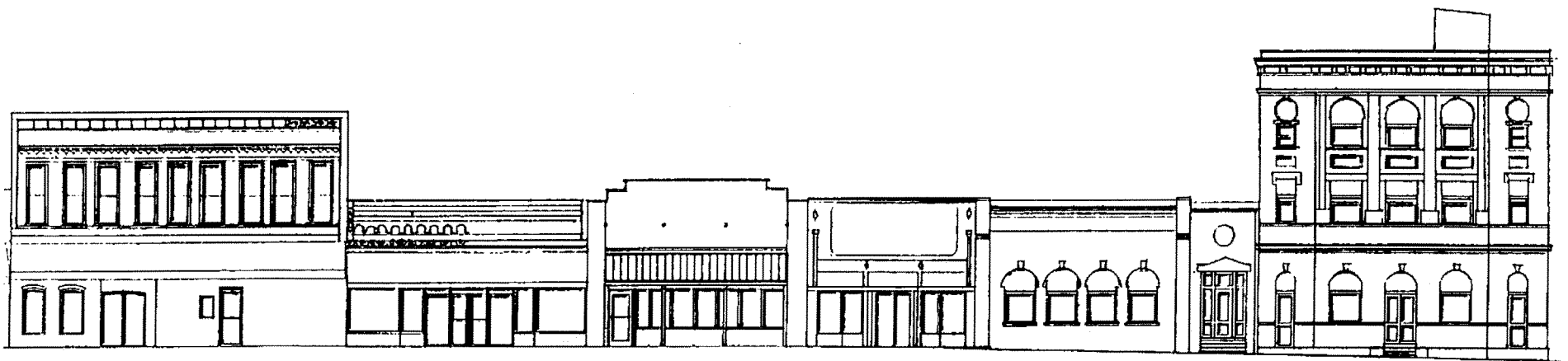
The guidelines have no control on the use of the building or its interior. Only the exterior portions, which includes new construction, additions, and rehabilitation of the building shall comply with the guidelines set forth.

These guidelines should be applied to a building based on its original use and construction. For example, a residence may currently be used as an office, therefore it is considered a commercial business, but it is still a residential building.

These guidelines will be used by the City of San Marcos to provide an objective basis for the decisions of the San Marcos Historic Preservation Commission and City Planning Staff. The guidelines specifically address the issues below, as outlined in Section 42.129 of the ordinance:

- Height.
- Proportion of building's front facade.
- Proportion of openings within the facade.
- Rhythm of solids to voids in front facades.
- Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets.
- Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projection.
- Relationship of materials and texture.
- Roof shapes.
- Walls of continuity.
- Scale of building.

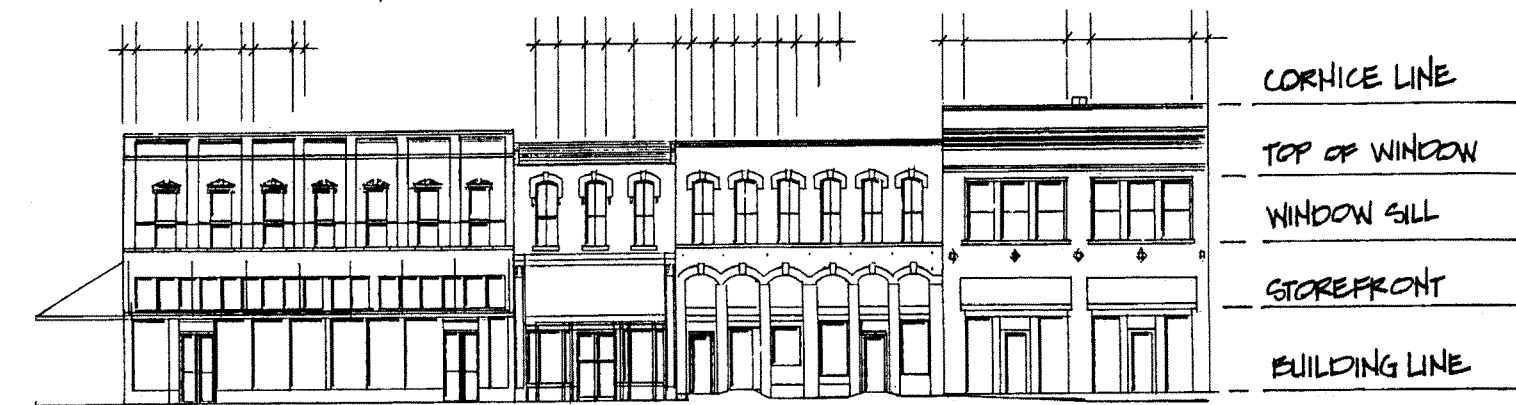




Design Guidelines for Commercial Buildings in the
Historic Districts of San Marcos

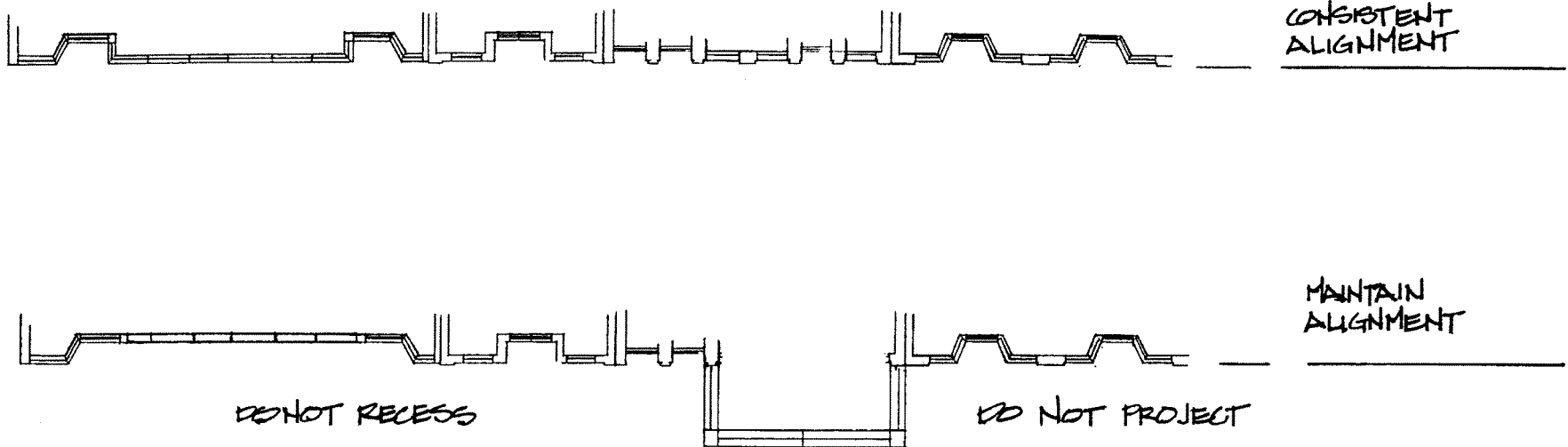
Building Characteristics

- Building Alignment 11
- Rhythm and Visual Continuity 12
- Horizontal Organization 13
- Ground Floor Rhythm 14
- Upper Floor Organization 15
- Common Building Heights 16



Building Alignment-Downtown Historic District

- Buildings in the Downtown Historic District have a consistent alignment or have a common set back. The front wall of all buildings is constructed along the same line.
- This common line of construction should be respected and maintained to give the appearance of a common wall.
- Construction and renovation of buildings should not recess from this line.
- No part of the building should project beyond this line except canopies, awnings, and, possibly, signage.
- Historic buildings that are not in the downtown square also have a set back from the street which should be respected.



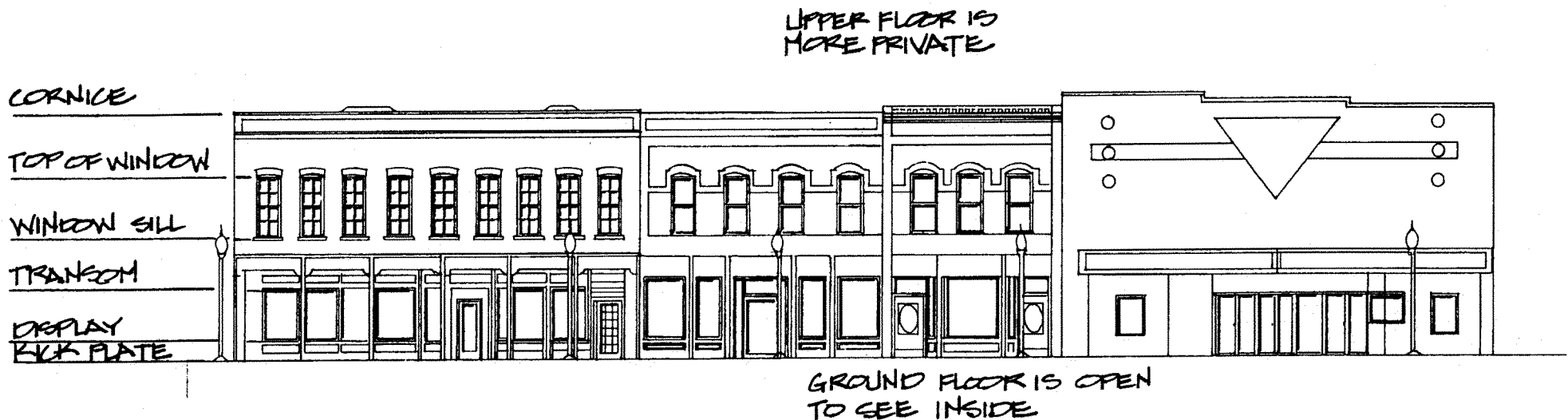
Rhythm and Visual Continuity

- Most commercial buildings in the Downtown District have elements in common, which create a rhythm and visual pattern.
- The majority of these buildings were designed on a strong architectural tradition of repeating parts. This tradition should be maintained.
- While all buildings do not have identical details, the visual continuity and rhythm remains.
- These characteristics should be maintained and enhanced as renovations occur.



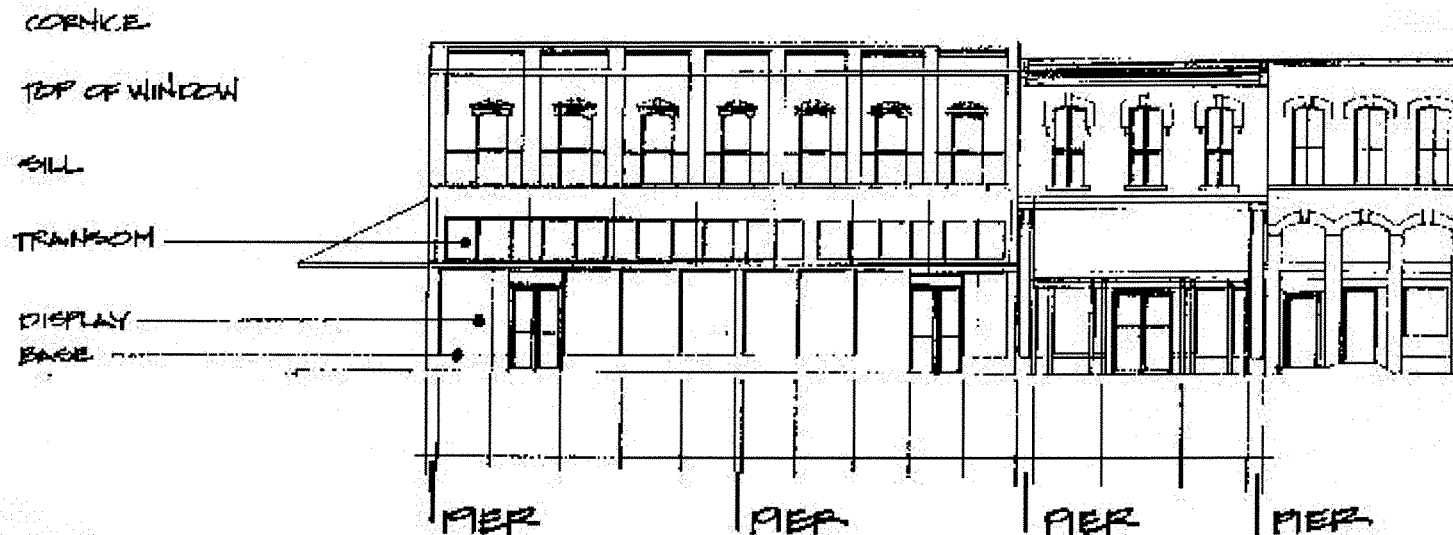
Horizontal Organization

- Downtown commercial buildings have a common horizontal organization in the heights of storefronts, canopies, etc.
- There is a clear difference between the ground floor commercial activities and the more private upper activities or living spaces.
- The horizontal bands are clearly seen in the front facades of the buildings.
- The upper and lower walls of the two part commercial building have very different openings and details.



Ground Floor Rhythm

- The regularity of building width creates a rhythm at the ground floor. Each bay, or structural width, is primarily made of glass panels. The panels create rhythm within the structural bay by repeating a similar width.
- Within the ground floor of the block, the wall surface is comprised vertically of three horizontal elements: the base or kick plate, the display windows and glass portions of the doors: and the transom.
- These are consistent elements in the ground floor of almost all buildings. These proportional elements should be retained.
- The repetition of display window and door components creates a rhythm in the block of buildings.
- A characteristic common to most commercial buildings is the recessed entrance. This recessed space adds to the rhythm of the building face. This rhythm is also experienced by the pedestrian walking down the block.



Upper Floor Organization

- The window openings are well defined at the upper floor and establish a pattern and rhythm of window-wall-window or solid-void-solid-void.
- Windows are vertically proportioned, usually tall and thin. The windows are normally made of wood and both top and bottom portions open for ventilation. Each window frequently has a decorative top piece.
- Buildings constructed later in the 1900s, after the Victorian period, often have windows placed in pairs or in banks of three.



Common Building Heights and Roof Shapes

- The 2 story buildings have a consistent height and similar capping detail.
- Some buildings have a constructed cornice of masonry while others have a pressed metal cornice.
- Buildings of 1 story have more variation in the height and detail of the cornice than their 2 story counterparts.
- Roofs on commercial buildings are not often seen from the front. They are nearly flat and are hidden behind the wall of the building.
- Side walls and rear elevations are not as detailed as the front elevation, but most roof lines have some form of cap or detail.



Building Components

• Storefronts	18
• Entrances to Buildings	19
• Doors in Commercial Structures	20
• Canopies and Awnings	21
• Upper Floor Windows	22
• Cornices and Roof Lines	23
• Alley Facades and Sides of Buildings	24



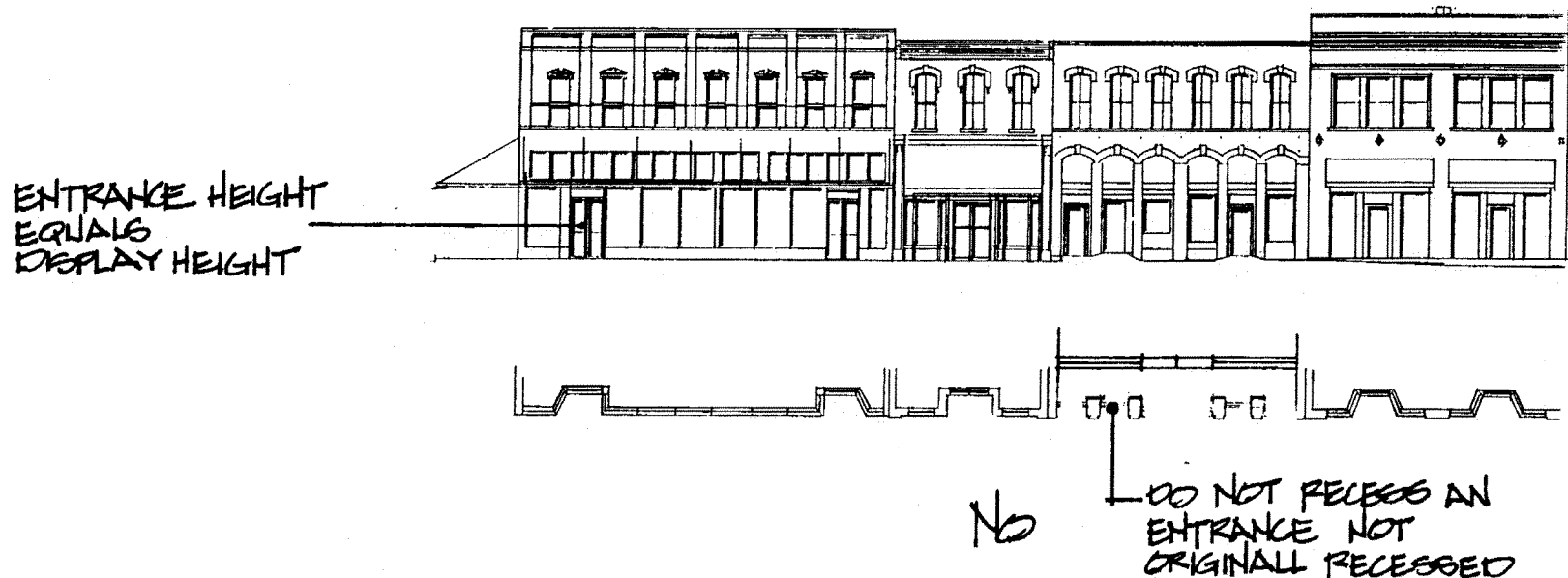
Storefronts

- Commercial storefronts have a basic organization, both vertically and horizontally, which does not depend on the size of the building. This organization exists whether the building is one story or three story.
- There is a common vertical three-part construction with a base or kick plate, a display window, and a transom.
- Commercial storefronts also have a common horizontal three-part construction in each bay including display-entry-display or display-display-entry. Very transparent storefronts invite shoppers to look in.
- These three-part divisions should be preserved.
- Transoms should not be covered over or painted out.
- Display windows should remain transparent and not be altered in size.
- Kick plates should be preserved and maintained. Kick plates were originally installed to raise the storefront and reduce the chance of damage. They are used the same way today.

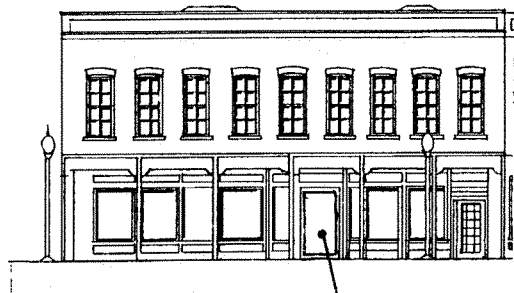


Entrances to Buildings

- The entrances to historic commercial building are recessed or set back from the face of the building to draw people into the building, allow space for entering and to provide protection from the elements. These entrances should not be changed. They should not be removed to create more interior space, nor should they project out beyond the common building wall.
- Entrances are proportioned to fit within the overall organization of the store front. The entrance height is equal to the top of the display windows.
- If an entrance was not recessed originally, it should not be changed
- Entrance heights should be retained. They should not be lowered.

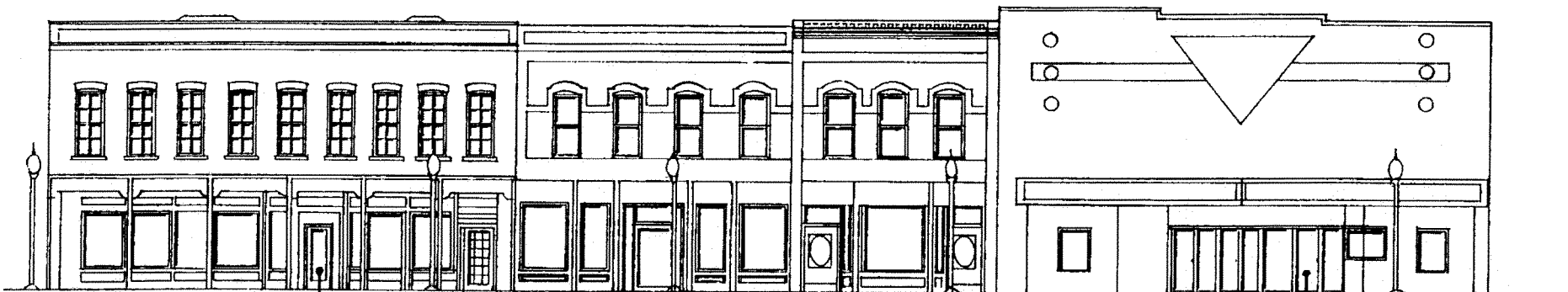


Doors in Commercial Structures



DO NOT INSTALL
AN ALUMINUM DOOR
IF A WOOD DOOR WAS
ORIGINALLY THERE

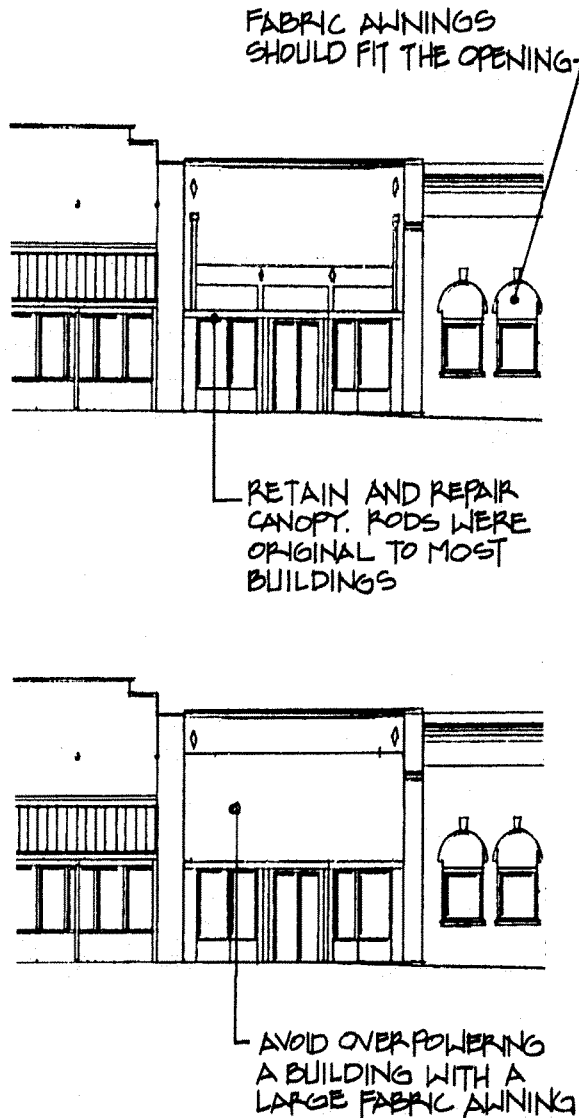
- Historic doors for commercial buildings are constructed with large glass panels to let you see inside. They also have a kick plate similar in design and proportion to the kick plate of the store front. Historic doors should be retained and repaired if necessary
- Doors are frequently installed in pairs. It is important to keep this configuration and not replace the doors with one large single door or reduce the opening to accommodate a new, standard sized door.
- If historic wood doors are beyond repair, it is important to replace them with wood doors of the same dimension and proportion.
- Aluminum doors and frames are not appropriate on Victorian buildings, or where wood doors were originally installed.
- Only aluminum doors, if original to the buildings, should be replaced with aluminum doors.



RETAIN HISTORIC
WOOD DOORS

ALUMINUM DOORS
ARE ORIGINAL TO
ONLY A FEW BUILDINGS

Canopies and Awnings



- Canopies are common on historic commercial buildings. They are a significant horizontal element of the building block and create a common, human scale.
- Some of the canopies in San Marcos are hung from the buildings with rods while others are supported by poles or columns. If “pipe” columns have been installed to support the canopy, they should not be left exposed. A box columns should be constructed around the pipe.
- Canopies should be maintained if still in place and consideration should be given to reinstalling a canopy if there is evidence that one previously existed. If canopies were previously replaced with contemporary aluminum canopies, they should return to the original design which was traditionally wood. Designs should be compatible to the time period of the building.
- Fabric awnings can also be found on commercial buildings. Canvas type materials are appropriate for installation and the awning should be constructed to “fit” an opening. A rectangular awning should be installed on a square or rectangular opening and an arched top awning is appropriate for an arched opening.
- Bubble awnings, awnings of shiny plastic, and internal lighting are not appropriate.
- Awnings and canopies should not conceal the character defining features of historic store fronts.
- The bottom of all canopies and awnings should be installed at the same height above the sidewalk. This will continue the horizontal organization already established
- Canopies on non-historic buildings are encouraged to relate to the adjacent historic structures in design and materials.

Upper Floor Windows

AVOID INSTALLING
WINDOWS THAT DO NOT
FIT THE STYLE AND PERIOD



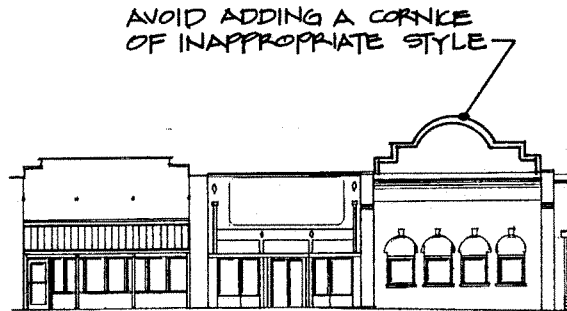
- The majority of windows on the upper floors of commercial buildings appear to be “punched” or constructed as individual units in the walls of the buildings. Newer buildings have windows constructed in combinations of two or three. Windows should not be modified.
- The windows are traditionally wood framed and double hung, meaning the sash move up and down. Wood windows should be maintained and not replaced by aluminum windows.
- Most window openings are tall and narrow. These openings should not be modified to install new, smaller windows.
- Many windows have hood molding or decorative tops made of pressed metal, stone, brick or other materials. These moldings should be retained and not removed.

AVOID “BLOCKING IN”
WINDOWS

DO NOT ALTER
WINDOW SIZE



Cornices and Roof Lines



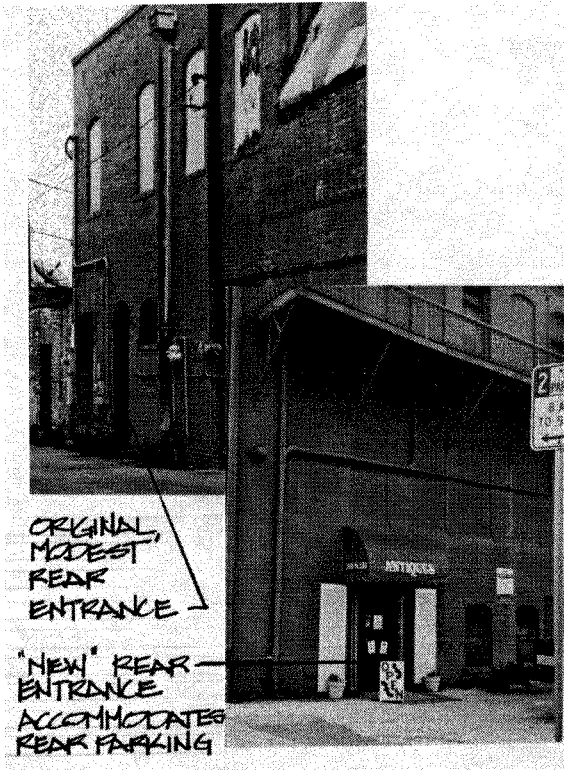
- The roof line of historic Victorian commercial buildings is usually detailed to create a “crown” or cornice. If newer materials cover these details, it is recommended that these materials be carefully removed to reveal the original detail.
- If the original cornice and detail are missing, replace the detailing to match the original if there is enough information to do so. If there are no photographs of evidence of the original design, construct a new, simplified cornice of similar proportions.
- The cornices of San Marcos frequently project out from the face of the building and should be maintained.
- The roof of commercial buildings is usually not seen from the front or sides of a building but may be visible from the alley. They are not seen from the main street because a parapet, or wall, extends above the roof to conceal it. This parapet should be retained and maintained. It is at the junction between the roof and parapet wall that many roof leaks occur.
- Upper floor additions to buildings should not violate the existing parapet.

EXISTING METAL
CORNICE PROJECTS
FROM WALL
DO NOT REMOVE



Alley Facades and Sides of Buildings

- The side and rear elevations of most historic commercial buildings were frequently constructed of a different material than the more prominent front facade. Frequently the detail, and the number and size of windows differs from front to side and rear. Alley and side facades should be respected for their simple design and should not be “dressed up” to create a false impression or false history.
- Some corner buildings were constructed with two “fronts” to face both streets. Both of these facades should retain their prominence.
- Historically, painted advertising often appeared on the walls of buildings. This signage is an important part of the history and development of commercial buildings and businesses. This signage should not be removed or painted over.
- Historically, alley entrances to buildings are utilitarian and not of architectural significance. As parking becomes more available from the rear or alley of the building, these entrances to the building may become a more prominent access to the building. However, this entrance should not compete with the front entrance or create a phony image.

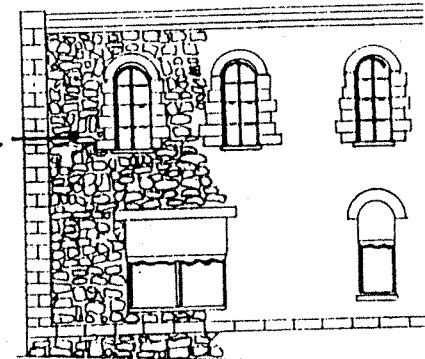


CORNER BUILDING WITH TWO "FRONT" FACADES



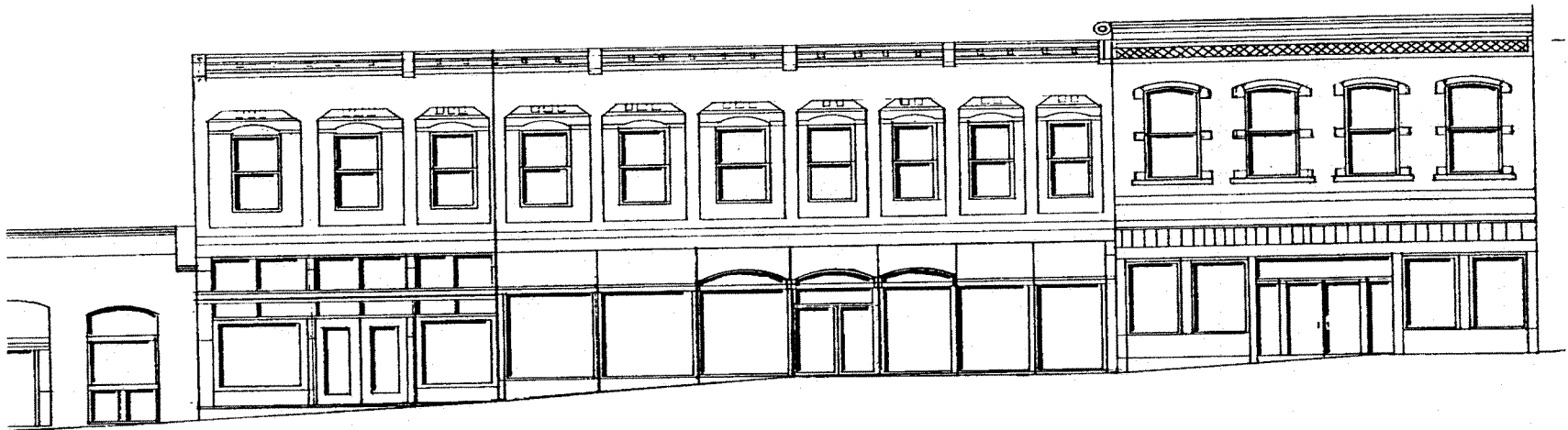
SIDE ELEVATION OF DIFFERENT MATERIAL

SIGNAGE PAINTED ON SIDE WALL



Materials

• Brick Walls	26
• Stone Rubble and Cut Stone	27
• Wood	28
• Metal as a Building Material	29
• Glass	31
• Stucco	32



Brick Wall Construction



BRICK DETAILS IN ARCHES
AND CORNICE

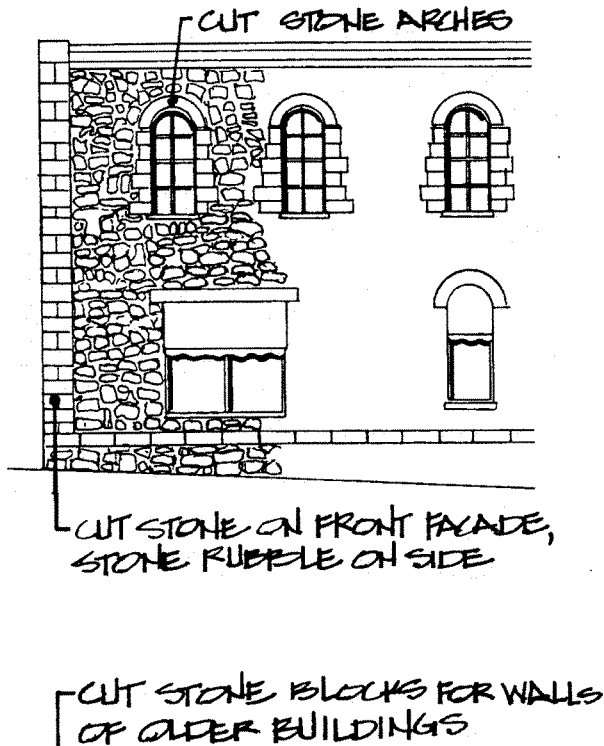


BRICK
CORNICE

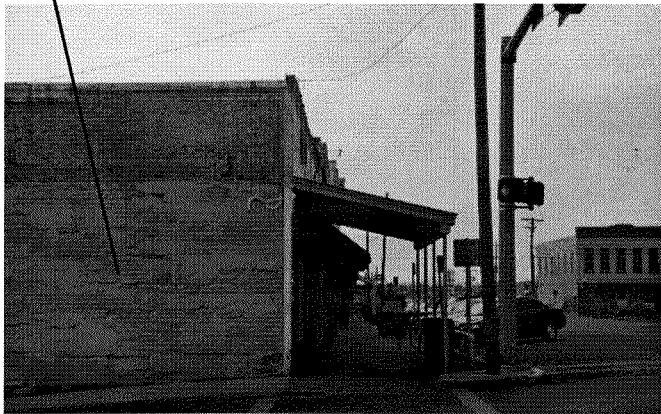
BRICK
BANDING

- Many of the commercial buildings in San Marcos are made of brick masonry. These brick walls are usually about a foot thick or more and carry the weight of the building.
- Brick walls are constructed by stacking single pieces together to create a pattern. Most wall patterns have a defined horizontal line.
- Brick is used to create decorative features which need to be preserved. These features are usually found around openings on a building, at the top of buildings to create a cornice, or to add to the horizontal organization of the building and block.
- It is important not to damage the face of the brick by sandblasting it or by using other abrasive methods of cleaning. Clean a building gently. Start with a solution of water and liquid *Joy* dishwashing detergent and a stiff brush. Chemical cleaning may be required for difficult stains but cleaning must be conducted by a knowledgeable professional.
- The material between the brick is called mortar and is important to the integrity of the wall. If the mortar is missing, it should be replaced with mortar of the same ingredients. Use a sand-lime recipe for mortar which is compatible with the old brick. Modern masonry mortar has cement as main ingredient which is too hard for historic brick. Too much cement in the recipe will accelerate the deterioration of the brick and may cause water to enter the wall.
- It is important to preserve brick detailing because it adds to the character of the building.

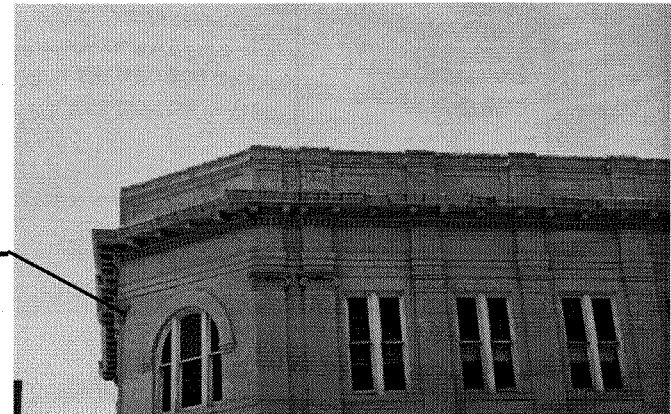
Stone Rubble and Cut Stone



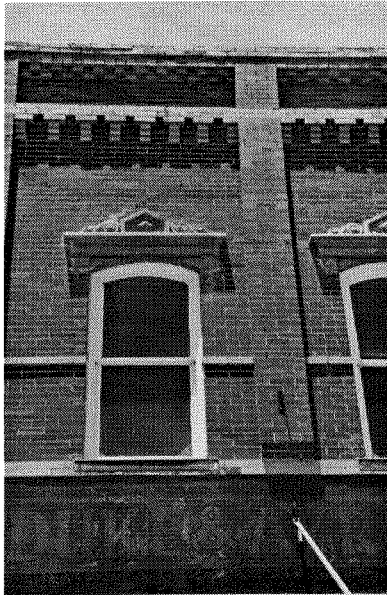
- Stone rubble refers to a type of stone which has an undefined shape. The uneven face of stone rubble and uneven size of the pieces provides a unique texture that is not found in other materials.
- Cut stone is a precisely shaped stone, usually with a smooth face in the buildings of San Marcos. It is frequently used as a decorative element on buildings or as a way to accent an opening. Cut stone can also have a great amount of detail such as columns and capitals.
- The limestone of San Marcos is a more durable stone than limestone found in other parts of Texas. Stone walls have a natural beauty and require no protective coatings such as plaster.
- The stone walls are put together with mortar in the same way brick walls are. The mortar should not be harder than the limestone. Portland cement mortar can cause damage to stone walls.
- If stone shows evidence of dirt and grime, it can be cleaned with a mild solution of soap and water. Do not sandblast stone. Care should also be given if a chemical cleaning solution is to be used. Some chemicals burn the face of limestone.



CARVED STONE
CAPITALS

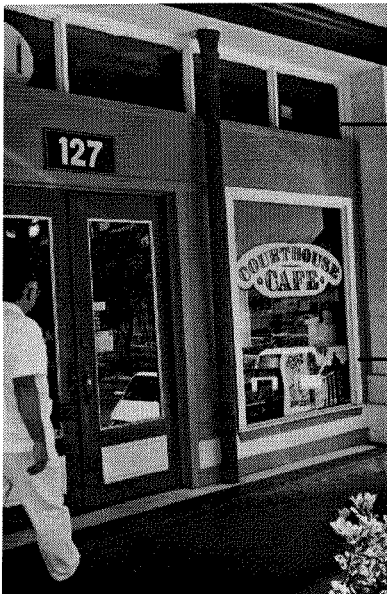


Wood in Commercial Buildings



RETAIN
WOOD
WINDOWS

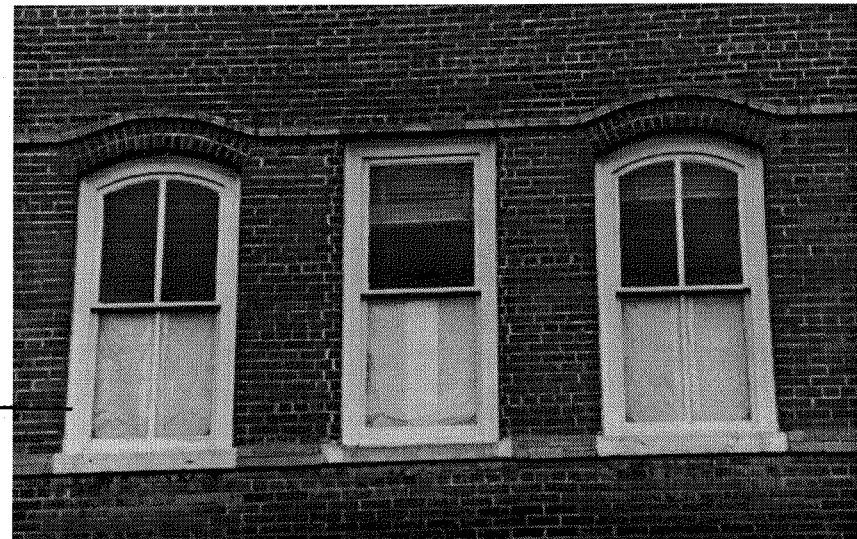
- Wood is a material that is used for a variety of architectural details such as storefronts and windows on many of the commercial buildings in San Marcos. Common locations of wood are window frames and sash; wood columns and canopies; wood storefronts including doors and frames for display windows and for kick plates or bases.
- Wood, when well maintained, can last for decades. However, it will rot with the presence of moisture. It is important to keep wood surfaces painted. When wood is badly deteriorated it should be replaced with wood of the same profile and dimension.
- Rough sawn wood is not appropriate for installation in historic buildings.
- Wood should be replaced with wood, not a simulated material.
- It should be noted that wood does not have a “wood grain” surface.



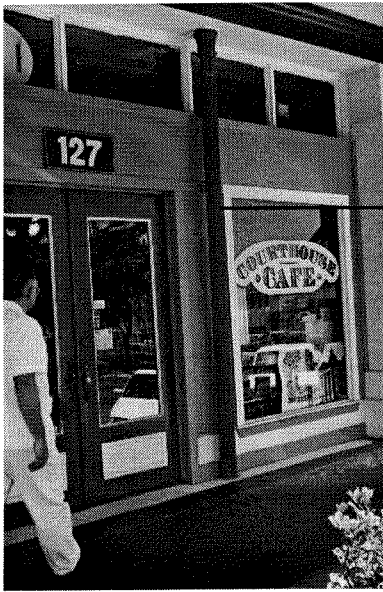
RETAIN
WOOD TRANKOM
RETAIN
WOOD STOREFRONT

RETAIN
WOOD DOORS

RETAIN WOOD
WINDOW FRAME
AND SASH

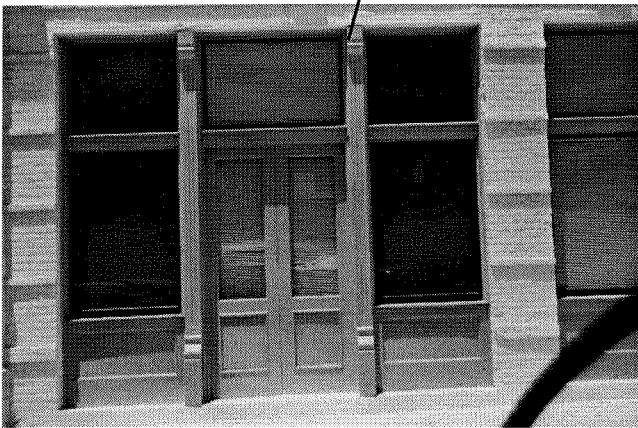


Metal as a Building Material



RETAIN CAST
IRON COLUMN

RETAIN
CAST IRON
STOREFRONT



- There are several types of metal found in and on buildings in San Marcos. The type and application of the metal on buildings help to identify the time period and style of the commercial buildings. Buildings of the late 1800s and early 1900s incorporated pressed metal and cast iron while more contemporary buildings utilize aluminum and steel in their construction.
- Cast iron columns and beams were used as structural components in some Victorian buildings around the square. Some columns stand away from the face of the building as on 127 Hopkins and 144 San Antonio. Others become part of the building storefront detail as on 113 Guadalupe and 107 Hopkins. These structural members, while functional, also add detail and scale to the building storefronts and should be retained.
- Pressed metal is often thought of as an interior ceiling material but is used for cornices and other details on many of the buildings of San Marcos. Several metal cornices are found on Guadalupe Street. Pressed metal cornices are constructed over a wooden framework. Deteriorated wood should be replaced to provide adequate support for metal cornices. Damaged and deteriorated pressed metal panels can be fabricated and replaced if necessary to retain the overall detailing. Pressed metal window hoods are found at 101 Hopkins. Pressed metal facades, though modified from the original, can be found at 110 San Antonio Street and 114-116 and 118-120 L.B.J.
- Another metal found frequently in San Marcos is aluminum. Aluminum is a more contemporary and was used on buildings dating from the 1930s.



PRESSED
METAL
WINDOW
HOODS

- such as 120 San Antonio Street. As a general rule, aluminum should not replace wood as a building material. This is especially true of doors and windows and their frames. If aluminum appears to be the only option as a replacement material for deteriorated wood, the aluminum should be of similar profile and should have a factory painted finish. Mill finish or “shiny” aluminum should not be used on a historic building to replace a previously painted material.
- Miscellaneous steel components can also be found at porch columns and porch structures, railings, turnbuckle supports at canopies, downspouts, etc.
- It is important to keep pressed metal, cast iron and steel well painted to avoid rust and deterioration.
- Metal should only replace metal.

PRESSED METAL CORNICE
HAS BEEN MODIFIED BUT RETAINS SCALE



METAL CORNICE

CAST IRON -
WINDOW HOODS
ARE UNIQUE
DETAIL



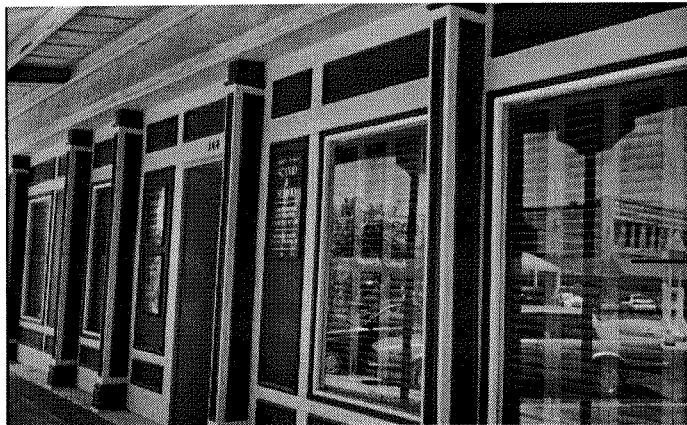
Glass



RETAIN
CLEAR GLASS
DISPLAY
WINDOW

GLASS AT
BASE/KKK
PLATE

- The transparent or “see through” quality of glass has been utilized in commercial building storefronts to draw customers into the shops and ground floor spaces. This is a quality that should be retained.
- Glass in the transom windows allowed light to enter deep into the ground floor. These windows should retain their transparent quality
- Tinted or reflective glass is not appropriate in storefronts and upper floor windows in historic commercial buildings and districts. This type of glass is uninviting and detracts from the character of commercial buildings.
- Glass was also used as a cladding material on commercial buildings during the 1920s and 1930s. The only glass skin found on a building in San Marcos is located at 101 E. Hopkins. An opaque red glass is installed on the base and storefront columns of the building. While this material is not original to the building, it can be retained because the remodeling has reached a period of historic significance and the traditional building characteristics have been retained.
- Broken glass must be replaced immediately to avoid damage to the interiors of buildings and building materials.
- Replace broken glass with glass that matches the original in color quality.



CLEAR GLASS IN
STOREFRONT
CLEAR GLASS IN
WINDOWS



Stucco

- Stucco or plaster is not a material common to San Marcos historically.
- Stucco is a material that has no dimension of its own, therefore it is not compatible in scale to the more common materials of San Marcos such as brick and stone.
- Stucco should not be used to cover a historic building material but might be used on new construction.



APPROPRIATE APPLICATION OF STUCCO

